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#118

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COMICS INTERVIEW

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CREDITS

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DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT
editor/publisher

conceived by
JIM SALICRUP
editorial and design consultant

DARREL L BOATZ
CHARLES S NOVINSKIE
associate editors

LOU MOUGIN
contributing editor

MACHINE WOLF GRAPHICS
art & tone direction

DON MARKSTEIN
typography

TIMOTHY BOYER
SALLY GARLAND
T GORTEL
D HAMILTON
Y A QUIN
production

JENNIFER BAKER
DIANE CASTRO
DANNY FELD
BILL HILLIARD
PATRICIA JERES
JENNIFER KISSELL
JOHN LAUB
LOREE McBRIDE
RONNIE NOIZE
ED O'NEAL
ERNEST C OVER
DEB TOFFOLI
KIM GOTTLIEB-WALKER
DAVID WEICEL
RENEE WITTERSTAETTER
special thanks

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MILES O'RIDIN'
aces grand slam

ED-O
morph-horse magnifiqwe

J R MATHER
international marketing director

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Art: Jim Salicrup

UP FRONT

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS MEETS GENE RODDENBERRY

Wagon Train to the Stars has pulled the wagons into a circle and made camp way out on the frontier. All but the most casual of Trekkers will recognize that I'm referring, of course, to STAR TREK and specifically to DEEP SPACE NINE.

In the '60s, **Roddenberry** was selling a concept — one which almost didn't catch on.

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Also in the '60s, **Roddenberry** was at work on another success story — **Edgar Rice Burroughs'** TARZAN OF THE APES. According to **George T. McWhorter**, curator of The Burroughs Memorial Collection at the University of Louisville and editor of THE BURROUGHS BULLETIN, it's not just a rumor — **Gene Roddenberry** really did write the screenplay for a TARZAN movie back in 1966. A copy of the script resides in the ERB collection.

The movie was never produced.

In the intervening 25 years, while TREK's star has been rising in popularity and recognition in the mass media, Tarzan (with the notable exception of GREYSTOKE) has languished, largely for lack of worthy attention.

What if events had taken a different turn? What if **Roddenberry's** TARZAN movie *had* been made? Could it have been a lightning rod for the kind of success that struck STAR TREK?

Makes you wonder.

-Dave

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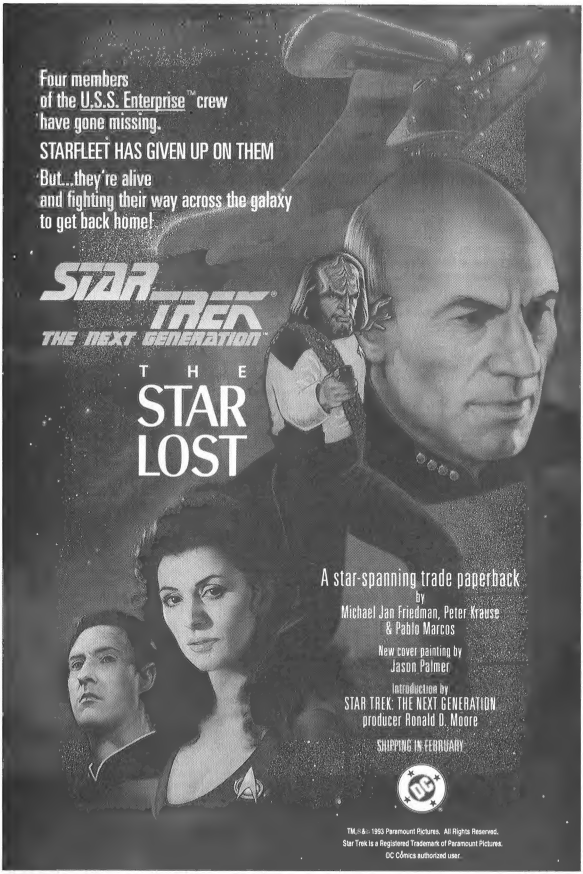
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"The Starpost will be open by late 1993."

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From space flight to hand-held calculators to personal computers to the vast array of microchip-enhanced business machines, vehicles, pens, notebooks, televisions and so on, the history of the last few decades has most notably been marked by technological advancements making fact of what previously had been but science fiction. For the past couple of years the cutting edge of technology has been sublimely married back to science fiction — and who knows where that will lead — with the promise of virtual reality. And, though it is still in development, very soon ST:ST:TNG/ ST:DSN fans will be able to take a trip to the future created by Gene Roddenberry .

Paramount Pictures has entered into a licensing agreement with St. Louis-based Edison Brothers Entertainment, to develop shopping mall-based virtual-reality entertainment centers themed after the television series, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, it was announced by Brandon Tartikoff, chairman of Paramount.

"STAR TREK has always been synonymous with the ultimate in technology," explained Mr. Tartikoff. "Our agreement with Edison Brothers will, for the first time, allow STAR TREK fans across the country to actually board the USS Enterprise and experience the excitement and adventure of the 24th century today."

One of the largest lessees of mall real estate in the country, Edison Brothers will unveil the first STAR TREK center sometime in 1993. Initial plans for the

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION & DEEP SPACE NINE TM & ©1993 Paramount Pictures. Virtuality is a trademark of W Industries, Ltd.

STAR TREK Virtual Reality Centers "will deliver

centers include virtual-reality attractions as well as restaurants and merchandise areas.

Visitors to the STAR TREK virtual-reality centers will choose among a number of game scenarios and the characters they want to portray. Many of the now-famous elements of the Enterprise — including the Bridge, the Holodeck, the Transporter Room and Engineering — will be re-created as environments for the various virtual-reality and simulation attractions.

"We are enthusiastic about teaming up virtual reality and STAR TREK to create the ultimate in experiential retailing," said Andrew Newman, chairman of Edison Brothers. "The odyssey of STAR TREK is virtually real to millions of Americans. We're proud to be associated with one of the entertainment industry's premiere properties of all time."

The STAR TREK virtual-reality attractions are expected to incorporate software created by Spectrum HoloByte Inc., an Alameda, California-based entertainment software company that holds the license for home computer and video-game software based on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION.

Edison Brothers Entertainment is a division of Edison Brothers Stores, Inc., which owns and operates more than 2,800 specialty stores in all 50 states. Its apparel and footwear operations include such national chains as J. Riggings, JW Jeans West, Oaktree, Bakers, Leeds, and Wild Pair. Its entertainment units include Time-Out, Space Port, and Exhilarama entertainment centers and Dave & Buster's restaurant/entertainment complexes. Edison's Horizon Entertainment division is the exclusive U.S. distributor of Virtuality, the only virtual-reality entertainment system currently available to the public.

Considered to be the boldest innovation in entertainment technology, virtual reality has captured the imagination of the public, who have been fascinated by the ability to actually be able to move about and interact with others in a "virtual world".

DARREL L. BOATZ: *I'm speaking with Andy Halliday, president of Edison Brothers Mall Entertainment. You have in development a STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION virtual reality system, I understand.*

ANDY HALLIDAY: That's correct. It goes beyond being a *system*, it is a *center* which will deliver the fiction of living in the 24th century, and in Starfleet facilities, in a very convincing way.

DARREL: *This sounds very exciting. To start out with, I'd like to get kind of the basic layman's primer: What is virtual reality?*

ANDY: Okay. Virtual reality is a computer-generated display which is delivered directly to your senses, typically your eyes, your ears, and sometimes touch, in such a way that all of the normal sensory cues from the *real* world are *replaced* by the computer-generated ones. The computer-generated cues consume your perception and you have the sense of being in an alternate reality.

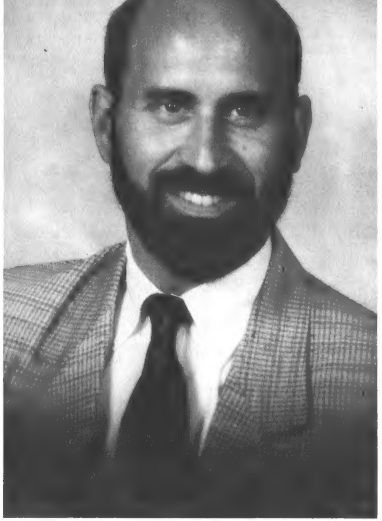
DARREL: *This is a fairly new concept, or —*

ANDY: Well, it's an old concept, but one which has only recently had enabling technologies available to deliver it.

DARREL: *Yeah, I understand there are — I am not really very familiar with this, but a friend of mine told me he had read about plans to create a suit of some kind.*

ANDY: Yeah. Right now you have a number of points of contact with the body that deliver computer-generated information, typically with the head-mounted display, and there's something in your hand, either a glove that measures the

Andy Halliday



living in the 24th century Starfleet facilities."

Above and throughout: Virtuality, Star Trek system predecessor and very first mall version of virtual reality.

"You can beam to a ship . . . the moon . . . or a space station."

position of your hand, or a stick that's tracked three-dimensionally in space, and which has switches on it that you can operate. That system is fairly incomplete in a *couple* of respects. It doesn't have force feedback, and it doesn't really immerse your *entire* body, or track all parts of your body, and deliver sensory input to all parts of your body.

A suit might do that. A suit could have sensors attached to it at major points, the knees, ankles, hips, shoulders, elbows, and all of that information could be delivered to the computer to track the *exact* orientation of your *entire* body so that a more complete depiction of your body position could be rendered in cyberspace. And then in exchange the computer could also deliver information to the suit and there might be actuators or tactile surfaces on the suit, either inflatable bladders or vibrating nodes or something like that, which would deliver the sense of touch when something in the virtual space makes contact with a point of your body.

DARREL: *Right. My friend was telling me that this would deliver a sense of motion even if you weren't actually moving, stuff like that.*

ANDY: I'm not clear on how that would work.

DARREL: *I didn't get to read this material myself.*

ANDY: Well, one of the largest cues to motion is peripheral vision. And one of the deficiencies of our current head-mounted displays in virtual reality systems is that they have a very narrow field of view, and don't *encompass* peripheral vision very completely, so you don't get a visceral sense of motion. You do have an *awareness* that you're moving, that you're navigating through the space. But that gut feel of *moving* is delivered largely by your peripheral vision, so when you get to a wider field of view with an HMD you'll get that sense.

DARREL: *What background does Edison Brothers have in virtual reality?*

ANDY: A division of Edison Brothers, Horizon Entertainment, is the exclusive distributor of the Virtuality System, which is the *only* commercially-available virtual-reality entertainment system in the market today. We've had that line, been operating it and distributing it in the United States, since November 1991.

DARREL: *I think I saw something on television about that.*

ANDY: Yeah, we've been on TV a number of times.

DARREL: *Let's get to STAR TREK. How did this connection come about?*

ANDY: Well, first, the capabilities of virtual reality could be succinctly described as a system in which you can *transport* yourself to some fantasy dimension. That immediately suggests the STAR TREK fiction of the transporter where, you know, you stand there and suddenly you're beamed to another location. In fact, the experience of being in a virtual-reality system, an *immersive* virtual-reality system, is best described as a sense of transportation, and when you take that thing off you're "coming back" from wherever you were. So, it's kind of an obvious connection in terms of what the technology can deliver and what the future is as described in STAR TREK.

The next connection was that in 1987 in my pursuit of networked interactive entertainment technologies I came across a fellow, **Gilman Louie,** who is the chief executive of Spectrum HoloByte — actually, his title is now chairman. Spectrum HoloByte is a very proficient 3-D PC and cartridge game developer, and they are best noted for their game FALCON which is the best flight simulator for the PC. They have a bank of VR experience in connection with some military projects, and they *happen* to be the licensees of Paramount Pictures' STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION for the PC market. It was that connection and Gilman and my interest in doing something like this in VR for public space entertainment that led to our approach to Paramount in early 1992.

DARREL: *And what kind of plans do you have for the ST:TNG VR center?*

ANDY: What it will be — and we're not disclosing *where* it will be — but when the first one opens it will be a fairly large facility where when you cross the threshold you'll find yourself in an official United Federation of Planets Starpost, which is an earthbound transportation and R&R facility for Starfleet personnel. It will have a transporter room and it will have a shuttle bay. The first one will have a ship's store, in effect, and at the entrance we'll have uniformed Starfleet personnel who will welcome visitors. And you can also sign up as a Starfleet cadet there and begin multi-session training that would culminate in your assignment on away teams, or as pilot on a runabout vehicle, or

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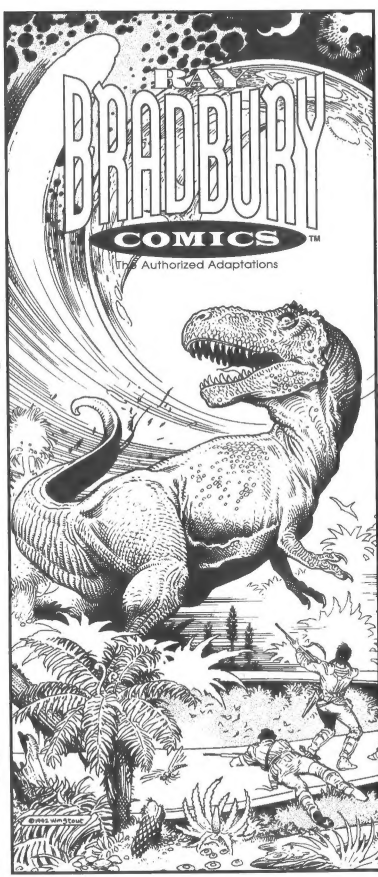

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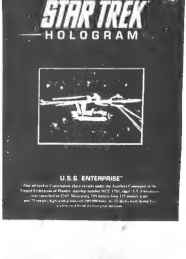

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"Starbase will be large, 30-40,000 square feet."

ultimately an assignment to a starship. In the transporter room you can — once you've had your orientation and so on — you can become a member of an away team and beam to another location. You can beam to a ship or — remember, in this fiction you are still on Earth —

DARREL: *Right*

ANDY: You're in a Starfleet facility, and now in order to get up to a ship that's in orbit you'll have to use the transporter or hop in a runabout and fly up. You could also beam to the surface of the moon, or you could beam to another location on Earth, or onto a space station or a space dock in orbit. There are also runabout spacecraft which you can pilot from that Starpost facility up through the atmosphere and into space, and you can rendezvous with ships or with *other* pilots of runabouts. There are various mission scenarios that we will develop that you will go through as part of training, and then as actual Starfleet operations

DARREL: *Wow, this sounds like a fairly "real" complete experience.*

ANDY: Oh, it's definitely *real*. And the subsequent opening, which will be in 1994, will be for a larger facility called Starbase. In that one, without donning immersive virtual-reality gear, just in your full body so to speak, you can go into a transporter room, beam up to the ship, leave the transporter room on the ship, walk down one of the curving hallways of the Enterprise, get in a turbolift, ride the turbolift to the bridge, then walk out onto the bridge.

There will be a uniformed command officer there to greet you, all the stations on the bridge are operable, and the forward main view will show a picture of Earth below — a very high resolution, very large screen display, just like the one you see on the show. Then, under the direction of the command officer, you can maneuver the ship and that display will respond. For example, if you speak to the computer and say, "Computer, give us a tactical plot of an approach to the moon," up on the screen will come the navigation plot of how to approach the moon. And if you say "engage" then the view will go back to forward main, then you'll see the Earth fall away and you'll sweep towards the moon, then accelerate on impulse power towards the moon.

DARREL: *Wow! This sounds* tremendous!

ANDY: Yeah, it's pretty ambitious.

DARREL: *When I first heard of your plans I didn't know what you had in mind. The virtual-reality demonstration I saw on TV was just of one guy having a fight with a computer-generated adversary.*

ANDY: That's a rudimentary example of what the technology can do.

DARREL: *Yeah. All this sounds great. Virtual reality systems are sort of an outgrowth of the simulator technology they've been using to train astronauts and pilots for a long time now?*

ANDY: Yeah, it's certainly related to that. Let me mention just a few more things about the Starbase. Starbase, the larger facility — it will be a pretty large thing, about 30,000 to 40,000 square feet. In addition to the transporter room that I described in the Starpost, where you can actually beam away to another environment — and I mentioned that you can go to the bridge — in *addition* there are going to be some shuttle craft, a *large* shuttle craft that will carry twelve passengers, which are motion platform devices that will be piloted by one of our Starfleet officers; we'll take people on kind of a quick trip through space, but that interactively. That's somewhat different from some of the things that most people have experienced, for example at Star Tours or whatever where those motion platform experiences are the same every time you go through them.

DARREL: *And it's a passive experience as well.*

ANDY: Right. In this case it will *also* be

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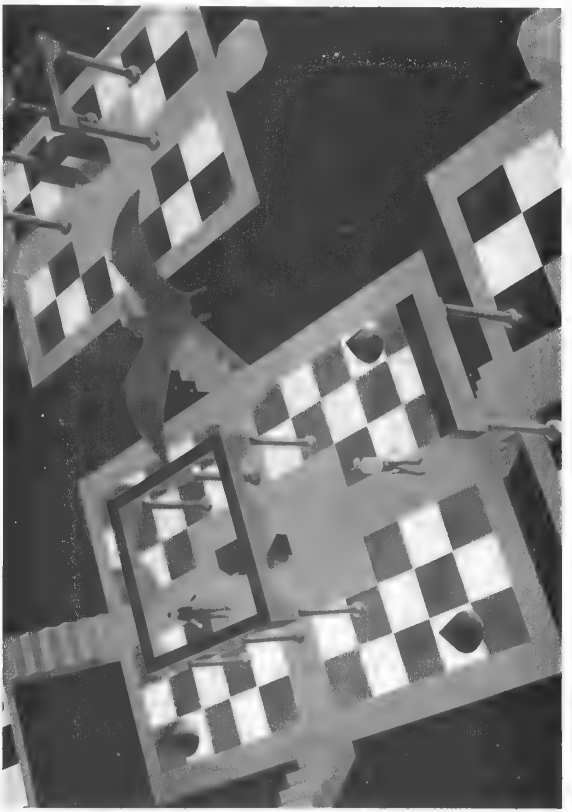

replicator, Romulan ale, whatever you like?"

passive for most of the customers, although it's interactive in the respect that our person flying the vehicle can take it anywhere they want to go. And then in addition to that we have — because Starbase is a major Starfleet R&R facility — there's a restaurant and a lounge, and you will be able to, as in Ten Forward, enjoy human or Klingonese selections from the replicator systems. You can have some Romulan ale, whatever you like.

DARREL: *Enter the world of STAR TREK — this sounds great. Let's see . . . when you first enter the system you'll be able to make choices? You mentioned earlier that you can take training for various —*

ANDY: That's right. One of the things we'll *encourage* is the multiple STAR TREK fan clubs that are out there that are each identified with a Federation ship. Each of those ships may want to register for time in the facility, and in advance of coming to the Starbase, for example — where they can actually get onto the bridge and operate it — they might want to go through training. We have written manuals that will help them understand the full operation of each station on the bridge.

In addition, if you have *no* proficiency, say you're not a member of a STAR TREK fan club and don't know much about the fiction at all, then you could sign up as a Starfleet cadet and we'll start you on an interactive training program that's done at computer stations right in the facility. You can come back numerous times and that will prepare you for your role as a security officer, or as a pilot of a runabout or as an officer in a position on the bridge; and then when you actually go into the simulation you'll be much better prepared.

Incidentally, you also have to pass certain written examinations and practical tests of operation and simulation in order to achieve higher levels of Starfleet rank, and *only* when you achieve those are you entitled to wear the insignia that are commensurate to the rank. Our system will keep track of all of our Starfleet personnel, what ranks they have obtained and what their mission experience is.

DARREL: *This is fantastic. To conclude, do you have any kind of target date in mind for the opening of the Starpost?*

ANDY: We're hoping that the Starpost, the smaller one, will be open by the holiday season this year, 1993. ☐

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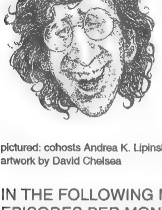

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"X-MEN is my favorite, but I like

Left-right (top): Rene Auberjonois, Nana Visitor, Colm Meaney, Avery Brooks, (bottom): Armin Shimerman, Terry Farrell, Cirroc Lofton, Siddig El Fadil.

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BATMAN and Image Comics, too."

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DEEP SPACE NINE™

CIRROC LOFTON

The youngest regular cast member of any STAR TREK series, Cirroc Lofton plays "army brat" Jake Sisko in DEEP SPACE NINE. What's it like to be 14 years old and a part of the STAR TREK universe? From what I can tell talking with Cirroc Lofton, it's an adventure . . .

DARREL L. BOATZ: *I'm speaking with Cirroc Lofton of DEEP SPACE NINE; Jake Sisko is the character. I understand you have a pretty extensive background in commercials, have been acting for quite awhile?*
CIRROC LOFTON: Yeah, I've been acting for about five years, been doing little commercial parts and things, educational videos and a part in the movie BEETHOVEN
DARREL: *I read where there was a rather extensive search for the actor to play Benjamin Sisko, and I was wondering what your experience was in getting this role.*
CIRROC: Well, during auditioning there were a lot of kids, when I was there at least 200 kids, and we went about four or five different rounds of auditioning. It went down to the last three and I got it!
DARREL: *When did you know you had the part?*
CIRROC: After the last one was over the guy I read for kind of . . . he kind of smiled at me. I thought that that meant something but I didn't want to get overexcited or anything, so I went home and there was a phone call and they told me that I had got the part.
DARREL: *Had you been a STAR TREK fan, a follower of either of the series, or anything prior to this?*
CIRROC: Yeah, I followed THE NEXT GENERATION. I occasionally watched the show and I'm familiar with the characters.
DARREL: *Now, the character you play, Jake Sisko — I've seen the first two episodes but I haven't really seen a whole lot of your character; it hasn't really been defined very well at this point. Do you have some idea about what direction this character is supposed to be taking, what kind of temperament he's supposed to have, things like that?*
CIRROC: Well, he's kind of bratty, when he talks with his father he's sometimes kind of angry or disrespectful. And

"Avery Brooks acts like he really *is* my father."

"We're really a big family here. Avery Brooks acts like my father; when they say 'Cut' he still plays around and makes jokes. He really doesn't have to act that much because he really plays my father like he is my father."

his friends are very mischievous, so that leads him on the wrong path. So, I'm up to a lot of no good. *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *For example?*

CIRROC: For example, my friend and I — Nog, he's a Ferengi played by **Aron Eisenberg** — what happens is he's a thief and everything and he leads Jake into these little mischievous things like taking little bugs and putting them on people. *(Laughter.)* And other stuff that really ticks people off.

DARREL: *I imagine you were pretty excited about getting the part, but were you frightened at all about the prospect of playing a STAR TREK kid? Were you hesitant about it, I mean?*

CIRROC: No, because Jake is a different character than Wesley, so I thought I could come at it from a different direction, I guess. I was really excited that I could mold Jake Sisko into a good character. And I'm still working on it.

DARREL: *How was the character defined when he was first presented to you, and what have you done with the character to add your own stamp to it?*

CIRROC: Well, what did it say . . . a 14-year-old space brat who doesn't even remember life on Earth — I think that was it. I've been doing my best to make that, but I'm also putting a little me into it. He wouldn't really talk that way to his father, he has more respect, and he's trying really not to blame his father for everything — but it just happens that way because it really is his fault *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *From what I understand, Will Wheaton had a kind of tough time because the character he played . . . well, not everyone, but some of the fans just weren't too happy about Wesley.*

CIRROC: Yeah, I was aware of that. They said that his role wasn't that powerful or anything, that Wesley was kind of wimpy. I don't know, but I heard people say that he didn't stand out or something. But I think in my role, where Jake causes his dad trouble — it's kind of difficult for him to run the station and handle being a father — Jake is just more mischievous, I suppose, than Wesley was.

DARREL: *Now, they've kind of changed the parameters with this series. It's not in that rarefied starship atmosphere anymore, it's a regular environment.*

CIRROC: Yes

DARREL: *Let's see . . . I know I had a question there somewhere.. Well, I can't remember it, so let's get back to your character. We'll be seeing a lot more of Jake, I hope*

CIRROC: Yeah, yeah. Have you seen

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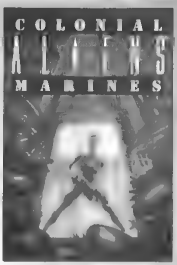

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"My friends say 'I see you on TV and it's different.'"

the second episode?

DARREL: *Yes. I mean, I saw the premiere show and then one episode after that.*

CIRROC: Oh, okay.

DARREL: *So, the one where you're featured should be the next one?*

CIRROC: I think. If I'd see an advertisement for it then I'd remember, because we've shot so many episodes.

DARREL: *As far as the show goes, I haven't heard anything about what kind of ratings it's getting.*

CIRROC: I heard that it did pretty good in Portland. I don't know what it means, but I heard it got a 40.

DARREL: *There's someone at the door, hold on a second.*

CIRROC: Sure.

DARREL: *(Returns a minute later.) That was the Girl Scouts selling their cookies. I really don't know, I've never been a child actor in Hollywood or anything like that, but I understand you have a lot of tutoring and stuff at the same time as you're doing all this work.*

CIRROC: Yeah, I go to school on the set. Well, the days that I shoot I go to school on the set, and then I go to my regular school when I'm not shooting. Right now I'm on vacation, school break.

DARREL: *So you haven't gone back to your regular school since the show premiered?*

CIRROC: Yeah, I haven't been back to school, and I won't be back until sometime in February.

DARREL: *How do you think your friends there will be when you come back to school?*

CIRROC: Well, I know they're going to say something when I go back to school. I don't know. My friends here, my neighbors, they react differently sometimes. Sometimes they make jokes, sometimes they ask if I can get them onto the set or something, can I get them autographs or something. Do I know Jean Luc Picard? Can I do this, can I do that for them? And then sometimes they'll say, "It's kind of amazing, I see you right here and then I see you on TV and it's different." *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *What's it like on the set of DEEP SPACE NINE?*

CIRROC: We're really a big family here. **Avery Brooks** acts like my father; when they say "Cut" he still plays around and makes jokes. He really doesn't have to act that much because he really plays my father like he is my father. Everyone gets on, laughing and joking and wisecracks, and it's really nice being there.

DARREL: *When you found out that*

"I collect comic books, stamps, baseball

you'd be working with Avery Brooks, what was your reaction to that? Had you met him before or anything?

CIRROC: Actually, at first I didn't know who **Avery Brooks** was. Then they said he was on SPENCER: FOR HIRE and A MAN CALLED HAWK and then I remembered his face, it all came back to me. But at first I just knew I'd seen his face before, like, "I know who that is but I just can't put my finger on it."

DARREL: *Were you a fan of SPENCER: FOR HIRE or A MAN CALLED HAWK?*

CIRROC: SPENCER: FOR HIRE, that was one of my favorites.

DARREL: *Do you have any other interests, are you a fan of science fiction or comic books or anything like that?*

CIRROC: I collect comic books, stamps, baseball cards — and my favorite sport is basketball! And that's why I was so eager to call you, because Chicago is my favorite team, the Bulls!

DARREL: *Ah!*

CIRROC: Yeah!

DARREL: *Good for you.*

CIRROC: I love the Bulls. As a matter of fact, I'm trying to get **Michael Jordan** on the show somehow!

DARREL: *That'd be great.*

CIRROC: I'm just, you know, hinting at it. like maybe I could play ball with him if we went back into the past or something. I don't know. But I really love **Michael Jordan** and all of the Bulls. That's my team! My room is full of Bulls paraphernalia.

DARREL: *You've got good taste. (Laughter.)*

CIRROC: It's my favorite home town — I lived in Chicago for awhile.

DARREL: *Oh, okay.*

CIRROC: I guess you could say I lived there; I visited for a long time and I considered it living there.

DARREL: *Were you working, was that why you were there?*

CIRROC: No, I was just there with my family.

DARREL: *Did you go see the Bulls play?*

CIRROC: Actually, I didn't get a chance to. At that time I was pretty young and I wasn't into basketball. But now I'd die to go see the Bulls play.

DARREL: *What did you think of the Olympics team?*

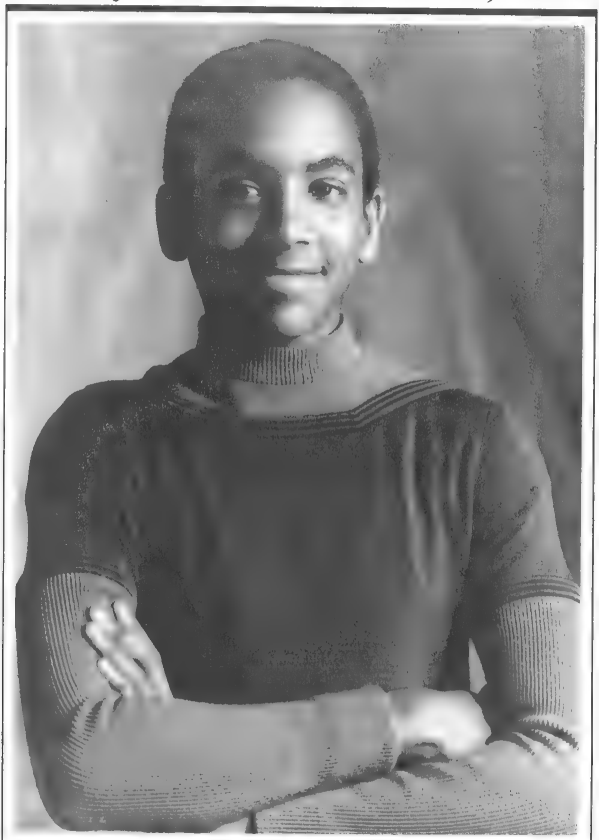
CIRROC: I thought they were great. I thought that was the perfect team. They were amazing! I mean, there's nobody that could ever beat them, you know.

DARREL: *Yeah. I was a bit disappointed that Magic didn't get to play more, but those things happen.*

CIRROC: Yeah. The thing I really didn't like was when the other team complained about why Magic shouldn't play. I didn't like that, that they said he shouldn't play because he might injure

cards — Chicago is my favorite team."

"I really love the X-MEN series; Gam-



bit and Wolve i and all are great'

them or whatever.

DARREL: *Yeah. There's so much misunderstanding about the disease and the virus and everything.*

CIRROC: Yeah

DARREL: *It's a real shame. Let's see . . . what kind of comic books are you into?*

CIRROC: I collect X-MEN and the other comics with X-Men in them X-FORCE, that's a good one.

DARREL: *Have you been watching the animated series?*

CIRROC: Yeah! Of course! I love that. I like Wolverine and . . I think his name is Morph. He changes.

DARREL: *Yeah, that's right.*

CIRROC: Yeah. I really love the X-MEN series, Gambit and Wolverine and all of them are great.

DARREL: *Anything else or just X-MEN?*

CIRROC: X-MEN is really my favorite, I have more X-MEN comics than anything else. The other things I'll collect because I think maybe they'll be worth some money, like Superman dies. Other comics, though, I do like, I enjoy reading them, but X-MEN is my favorite. Then I have other favorites, too. I like BATMAN. And these new comics coming out, Image Comics, I like them. They have the signings and I have everyone's autographs. I have all the certificates — every time they have a signing down at Golden Apple on Melrose right here, I go down and get the autographs. And I get the pens that the artists draw with — not the same ones they've used, the same kind they use — and I have them autograph the pen

X-Men TM & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

Art from recent 12-part crossover. The X-Men were created in 1963 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

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COLM MEANEY

I don't know if Las Vegas gave odds, but I doubt that many people would have bet against STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE being a success. After all, its precursor, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, has been for many years now the most popular program in first-run syndication. But still, there are risks being taken at Paramount.

As NEXT GENERATION in its way broke from the tried-and-true formula of the original STAR TREK, so too is DEEP SPACE NINE boldly going where no STAR TREK has gone before. I consider myself fortunate, then, for the opportunity to speak with a man who has had an inside view of both the tried and true and the daring and new . .

DARREL L. BOATZ: *I'm speaking with — how do you pronounce it?*
COLM MEANEY: Like a newspaper

"Rick Berman went hunting for Siddig."

column.

DARREL: *I'm speaking with Colm Meaney of STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE. You've been with STAR TREK since the premiere episode of NEXT GENERATION, is that right?*

COLM: Yes, I was *briefly* in the premiere episode. Then I was away for a year, I was back in New York doing a play, BREAKING THE CODE, on Broadway. So, I missed the rest of the first season and the beginning of the second season. I started recurring then about midway through the second season.

DARREL: *It's sort of strange talking with you now; I just saw you the other day on one of the television shopping channels.*

COLM: Oh, right!

DARREL: *They sell some amazing stuff.*

COLM: They sure do, yes. I was staggered by it.

DARREL: *Now, with DEEP SPACE NINE you're carrying over your character from NEXT GENERATION, but the others are all new characters.*

COLM: Yes.

DARREL: *You were around, then, when they were developing all the ideas for DEEP SPACE NINE.*

COLM: Yes.

DARREL: *And the others wouldn't have been. Did you have any input? Did they talk to you at any time about it?*

COLM: Not really, no. I read the original treatment, as it's called — prior to a script actually being written — but all of the characters had kind of been established by then. They had all been sketched out, and the *leading* characters fairly specifically.

DARREL: *I guess you were also lucky in that you didn't have to go audition for the role.*

COLM: Yes, absolutely! *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *I understand that took quite awhile.*

COLM: Yeah. Well, the producers are very good like that. I think the cast of NEXT GENERATION and the cast of DEEP SPACE NINE shows that. They get really good people, they get *quality* people; mostly people with theater background, too. To do that, obviously, it takes a lot of time to get it right. But the results are there, you know, both at NEXT GENERATION and this show.

DARREL: *Right. I was reading through some of the information Paramount sent me, and I had never heard of Siddig El Fadil before, but he's got some very impressive background.*

COLM: Absolutely, yeah. **Rick Berman,** the executive producer, had

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"Every week brings a new discovery. A new *event!*"

seen Siddig in a British made-for-TV film, and sort of went *hunting* for him after seeing that.

DARREL: *As these other characters were cast, did you . . . I mean, you've been around STAR TREK for awhile now and you understand about STAR TREK fandom, how it's this very immense thing.*

COLM: Yes

DARREL: *Did you have any advice for the other actors as they came on?*

COLM: Well, no. It was *basically* to just put them at ease about it. I've done quite a few conventions over the last three years or so, and there's great *loyalty* among the fans. There's no more *craziness*, in that sense, than there is with any other TV show, you know. I think every show or particular actor gets their share. But no; I was able to advise them only in the sense of saying it was actually *not* what a lot of people maintained it was. In doing conventions and that, the fans for the most part were really very *respectful*. They want to say hello and shake your hand, but then they'll respectfully let you get on with whatever you're doing.

DARREL: *I talked with Cirroc and . . . Well, I understand that Will Wheaton — I enjoyed his part on the show but a lot of fans apparently didn't, and he had a kind of tough time with that. Did you talk with Cirroc about this at all?*

COLM: Not really. I wasn't really that aware of what was going on with Will. I noticed at conventions there was a body of people who were critical of the character, of what he was doing or what he had done, but I never understood it, I didn't now where it was coming from. And hopefully Cirroc won't encounter that! I'm certainly not going to bring up a negative possibility at *this* stage of the game. If something like that *were* to crop up perhaps I could give him advice on that, but I just don't think at the *beginning* of the series that it would be appropriate to say, "Look, you've got to watch out for this, this and this!" You know.

DARREL: *Yeah. Well, I never understood that reaction to Wesley. it was just a character in a TV show, after all.*

COLM: Yes, absolutely.

DARREL: *As we're speaking I've only seen the premiere show and one episode after that. How far ahead are you from that in production on DEEP SPACE NINE right now?*

COLM: We're actually up to episode #10 at the moment.

DARREL: *I'm just curious a little bit about how this series is shaping out, because this world that's been created here is different from the two shipboard series.*

COLM: Yes

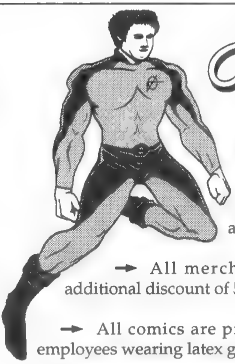
DARREL: *There's kind of an atmosphere in those series where the crew represents an epitome of Starfleet personnel, and that's concentrated on the ships. Now we've gotten away from that.*

COLM: Yes. I think in a sense what's happening with the wormhole thing and all that — we are, of course, *not* on board a ship — but every week brings a new adventure, in a sense. A new discovery. A new *event!* And usually the source is from the wormhole, or through the dramatic situation created between the Bajorans and the Cardassians. So, in *that* sense I think there is still that similarity — every week *is* a new adventure.

DARREL: *Rosalind Chao is going to be appearing as Keiko.*

COLM: Yes, absolutely. Rosalind did two or three episodes. I was away, I missed three episodes, #6, #7 and #8, because I was doing a film. And Rosalind is likewise engaged, she's away doing a

"The cast we've got together for this is *superb!* They're all terrific actors with a lot of theatrical, TV and film experience behind them."



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"The wormhole is an energy field of its own."

film and then she'll be back. Shortly, we hope.

DARREL: *You two have a chemistry, it's really worked in the past*

COLM: Well, that's nice to hear. *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *You've gone from being, I guess, a semi-regular to being a feature player. How has that transition been for you?*

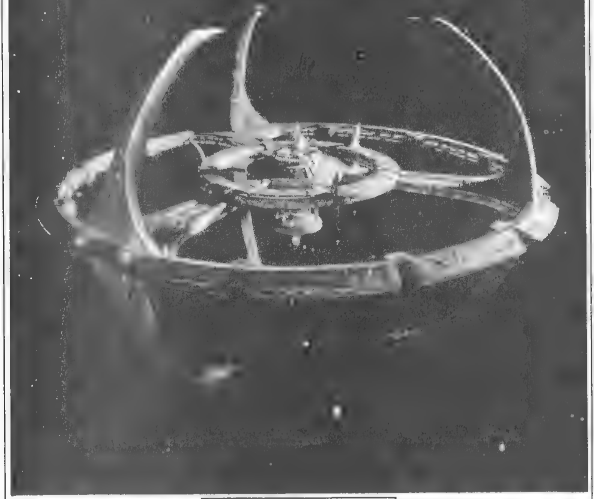
COLM: Well, it's been kind of an idyllic situation, really. The character was developed over a long period, about four years, and that really *helps* an actor. You're not suddenly faced with a whole new agenda or anything, it's a gradual process, and that's always easier to deal with than suddenly trying to create a whole new thing. And the transition from NEXT GENERATION to DEEP SPACE NINE was easier because they were writing more and more for me on NEXT GENERATION; there were a few episodes where they developed O'Brien further. It *feels* like a logical continuation of what I was doing on NEXT GENERATION, really, the way we've moved him onto the space station

DARREL: *Now, I don't really understand this wormhole concept. It's like a* tunnel *through space?*

COLM: Yeah, it's *similar* to a black hole that they talk about in present-day terms. It's basically a *sort* of vacuum, as it were, that sucks . . . I mean, you don't travel through the wormhole on your own power, it's almost like a suction thing that works in both directions. In terms of the scientific details, I'm not sure of that, of exactly *how* it works. But it's *basically* that it connects different, very far-flung parts of the galaxy.

DARREL: *Well, the concept of a hole in space kind of blows my mind and I still don't understand.* (Laughter)

COLM: Well, you see, while it's called a hole, of course it isn't *actually* a hole. It's an energy field of its own.



"They're all terrific actors, with theatri-

DAK's COMICS INTERVIEW presents DS9's Dax, Terry Farrell.

DARREL: *Okay. Do you miss the cast from the other show at all?*

COLM: Yeah, absolutely. Luckily, we're just across the street so I pop over and pay visits every now and then when I have a little bit of free time.

DARREL: *Let's see . . . you mentioned the Bajorans and the Cardassians, and this is another thing where it's different from the other shows. We've got this political situation that's like a permanent part of this series?*

COLM: Yes Well, it's permanent in the sense that historically it will always be a factor. The situation was the Cardassians had, in a sense, *colonized* Bajor. They are now leaving, they're withdrawing, and we're in a transition period where the Bajorans are taking over their own planet again. We sometimes have to say it in contemporary terms. It's almost like the Federation is the U.N. presence helping in the transition from a colonial to an independent post-colonial state.

DARREL: *That's an interesting idea, yeah. Are there any Chief O'Brien stories coming up soon that we should be looking for?*

COLM: Well, there's one particular episode coming up that features me more, perhaps, than some of the other characters, but generally speaking the early shows are about introducing *everybody* kind of fully and equally.

DARREL: *This is very much an ensemble show?*

COLM: Yes, right.

DARREL: *So you want to showcase the ensemble.*

COLM: Yes.

DARREL: *How is that working out?*

COLM: It's great, it's great! Like your earlier question there about the casting of it taking a long time, the cast we've got together for this is *superb!* I was realizing how *lucky* we were with NEXT GENERATION, and I didn't think we'd get that lucky twice, that was my feeling about it. But in fact this cast has gelled together *very* quickly. And they're all, as I say, terrific actors with a lot of theatrical experience, and TV and film experience, behind them. You know, Rene has a *wonderful* theater career behind him as well as all the television and film work he's known for. So, it's been *tremendous!* You've got a lot of talent there, and gelling together as quickly as they have has been remarkable.

DARREL: *Yeah. I was surprised when I heard Avery Brooks had been cast, but only because he'd been the star in another show before and that's another first for STAR TREK, to pick up somebody that's been there before.*

COLM: Yes, indeed, but Avery is such a gifted actor and an amazing presence. It was quite a coup for them to *get* him.

DARREL: *And he's got a great voice, too*

COLM: Absolutely. I've got to run now. Thanks a lot, good talking to you.

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"Living apart from civilization makes it easier to work."

MARK WAID

Two covers from Marc's FLASH — pencils, Greg La Rocque; inks, Jose Marzan.

Mark Waid is a Texan. With those qualifications he could hardly do less than succeed in his chosen endeavor. I am a Texan and I know about these things.

Specifically, Mark is currently one of DC's busiest "new" writers (he's been there for about five years, but what the hey!), currently handling anything they throw his way. At DC, his Texanism can do no less than steadily improve the place in ways both subtle and awesome to behold. Yankees take note.

Let us speak . . .

LOU MOUGIN: *You've been scripting JUSTICE LEAGUE QUARTERLY, the ARCHIE comic and the ARCHIE newspaper strip, THE FLASH, THE SHIELD, and THE COMET along with one-shots such as the DETECTIVE COMICS ANNUAL and the Human Target in ACTION COMICS. Now tell me, Mark, did I get them all?*

MARK WAID: *(Laughter.)* I have no life anymore!

LOU: *That was part of the deal when you contracted with DC Comics — right?*

MARK: Actually, it worked out really well; living apart from civilization certainly makes it easier to do work. I have the equivalent of a cabin in the woods — except for cable TV. I think you covered everything at this point.

LOU: *Tell us a little about how you got to be an editor at DC, how you lost that job, and how you ended up as a scripter.*

MARK: In order to work as an editor in comics, and this is the sad but unmitigated truth, you have to know somebody. That's all there is to it in the world. Very few people just get hired in off the street. In my case, I had done all of this work for AMAZING HEROES over the years, doing pieces here and there,

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"I have a strong feeling about how things should be done."

articles, intervews and such. I got to know a lot of people that way, such as **Andy Helfer, Mike Gold** and the big shots at DC. I did some writing for VARIETY on Superman's fiftieth anniversary and got to talk to **Dick Giordano.** That's how I got to know these people. I also made sure that I met them at conventions. In other words, I made sure that they knew who I was and that I was interested in working there.

In April of 1986 they invited me out to do an interview (I was living in California at the time). The interview was for what was going to become the Piranha Press job and I was there along with a half dozen other guys. I was the first interview, which was actually a comedy of errors that wasn't very funny at the time. **Dick Giordano** was the one that invited me out and said that we have this super top-secret editorial job and we can't tell you anything about it.

It turned out that **Jenette Kahn** was the one who was going to do the interviewing. She knew what the job was; I didn't. After about five minutes of interviewing I had already pretty much sunk my own ship. *(Laughter.)* She's sitting across from her desk, is taking notes on questions that have no answers, and at one point looks right at me and says, "What is it in your past that you have done that shows you have the entrepreneurial skills that it takes to build a business from the ground up?" I froze; calendar pages are zipping by me and I'm looking at my watch. Finally, I look up and say, "I sold band candy in high school." Unfortunately, she didn't laugh. She's a swell lady but we didn't connect.

I oozed out of her office and Dick kept trying to hold me up, all the time telling me not to worry. He said that maybe this wasn't the job for me but — trust me — you'll be working here soon enough. As good as his word, I ended up working there just a few months later. I came on to do SECRET ORIGINS and a lot of the WHO'S WHO work. I was assistant editor on INFINITY INC., YOUNG ALL-STARS and co-edited SECRET ORIGINS with **Roy Thomas.** I also did the DAILY PLANET one-shot along with a few others.

Before I came to DC I had written a handful of Superman stories for **Julius Schwartz,** nothing to speak of. I was in my early twenties and it was a fun thing to do; I never really thought of myself as a writer, though. I was always leery of guys that would come in as editors only to get writing jobs. If you're going to be

Last page from COMET #10 by Waid, Panosian and Albrecht.

an editor then be an editor. That's what I wanted to be; I didn't have any goals to be a writer.

I remember calling **Brian Augustyn** in the middle of the night trying to get him to talk me out of the idea of wanting to do all SECRET ORIGINS stories in the annuals next year that were all imaginary stories. Instead of talking me out of it he said that maybe we could do Batman in the nineteenth century. We kept talking and talking and the next morning he comes in with the story for GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT.

LOU: *And then you weren't an editor anymore?*

MARK: I guess you could say that I was an editor one day and not an editor the next. I want to be diplomatic about this — because I don't want to burn too many bridges behind me. I tend to be a little bull-headed and my tendency about anything is to lead — to follow — or get out of the way. I will listen to people, but I also have a strong, passionate feeling about the way things need to be done. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, except that I kept picking fights with people who were bigger than me; people with more authority, people with more seniority.

LOU: *Seniority is pretty much where it's*

"It was eventually decided it would be better for all

at at DC?

MARK: Right. You know, it didn't matter if I was right or not. The issue was that I shouldn't have been pissing off certain people. I didn't think of it as pissing off certain people, but apparently I was just a thorn in too many people's sides. It was eventually decided that it would be better for all parties concerned if I found a different way to serve DC Comics. *(Laughter.)* I'm not bitter about it because it worked out real well for me. I ended up suddenly making money hand over fist and I can get up whenever I want to in the morning and I don't have to answer to anybody.

LOU: *That's fantastic.*

MARK: It worked out pretty well.

LOU: *Tell me how you ended up with the job of ARCHIE scripter for both the book and the strips.*

MARK: Through **Robert Loren Fleming,** who had been doing a little stuff here and there for Archie Comics. We're friends and shortly after I left DC he learned that there was a position for a part-time proofreader at Archie Comics. I went to Archie and got along well with **Victor Gorelick** and ended up working there. Proofreading suddenly became the least important aspect of the job. I was helping out with the production, with the color; I was a jack-of-all-trades. They were just looking for a proofreader and here comes this guy who had done all of this editorial work. After years at DC I had a pretty good idea of what it takes to make a comic book.

Chris Allan was on staff at the time; he's a very, very funny guy and we hit it off immediately. He's a great artist and more of a writer than he thunks. We started pitching ideas and had quite a few stories published for Archie Comics. Once a week the newspaper strip would come in and, without trying to slight whoever came before us, sometimes it was funny and sometimes it wasn't. From time to time we would tinker with the strip, with **Victor Gorelick's** permission, to make it a little bit funnier. Over a year ago we were offered the chance to do the newspaper strip. Just days later Victor learned that the guy who writes the strip is the brother of the owner of the syndicate and that perhaps we would be wasting our time. So we put that on the

"COME TO MY ARMS, MY BEAMISH BOY!
"O, FRABJOUS DAY! CALLOOH! CALLAY! HE CHORTLED IN HIS JOY!"
RECOGNIZE THE QUOTE? YOU SHOULD! IT'S FROM MY FAVORITE BOOK:
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS!
AH HAHAHA!
I'M SURPRISED! I THOUGHT FLASH WOULD BE FIRST TO FIND ME — NOT KID FLASH!
STILL, WITH YOU HERE, HE CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND, CAN HE?
I'D HOPED TO LURE HIM HERE MYSELF — BUT NOW YOU'VE DONE THAT FOR ME.

concerned if I found a different way to serve DC Comics."

LOOK CLOSELY! IT'S SHRUNK SUBSTANTIALLY SINCE IT LEFT THE OCEAN!
NOW, THINK BACK TO LAST NIGHT! REMEMBER HOW IT WENT SMOOTHLY AFTER THE GUN GOT?
OH! I SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING!

back burner. Then a few months ago the notion came up again and we were told to just do it. It's like in seventy papers now and it's dying so there's nothing we can do to hurt it. We've done about a month's worth of continuity and we're waiting approval from the syndicate now. I will be co-writing the strip with Chris and he will be pencilling and writing it.

LOU: *That's certainly a step in the right direction as far as syndication is concerned. A lot of people don't get that type of opportunity after years and years of working in comic books. Do you get a percentage from the syndicate for doing the strip?*

MARK: We're just getting paid per strip, at this point. There are no extra perks but I think the strip is only carried by the GRIT. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *You have a teenage Archie and a young Archie. What about doing an ancient Archie strip?*

MARK: We've talked about that many times. We have like Archie One which is a prehistoric character; Archie Three Thousand which is like the Jetsons thing; and I want to do Archie Two Billion. There would be this brain just floating around with Jughead's hat. *(Laughter.)* The other day someone was talking about ARCHIE 400. Of course they were talking about the four hundredth issue of ARCHIE. All I could think of was Archie in Babylonian times.

LOU: *What led you into this life of sin during your own prehistoric times?*

MARK: I was born in 1962 and my mother taught me to read at an early age so I was reading by late 1966. I was captivated by the BATMAN TV show. I still remember the first comic by dad brought home for me, BATMAN #180. It was the one with this skeleton man kicking Robin into an open grave during a rain storm and I thought it was very captivating.

LOU: *It was no doubt the best Batman story to come out during that period of camp.*

MARK: Definitely. My love for comics never stopped. I did eventually discover girls but I always kept up with comics. I kept buying them and accumulating them. I loved the DC stuff and I read the Marvel stuff voraciously during the '70s. I have a good working knowledge of the histories of most of the comics companies — but it's the DC stuff that's the closest to my heart.

LOU: *We first met when we did the two CRISIS INDEX volumes together. You did the LEGION INDEX separately and then you got the job of editing AMAZING HEROES for awhile. What was that like?*

"I fell prey to the cycle of the rising and setting of

MARK: That was a lot of fun — until it stopped being fun, if that makes any sense. **Kim Thompson** had been offering me the job for years, wanting me to come out and edit AMAZING HEROES for, like, $8,000 a year or whatever the hell it was they were paying at the time. It was like eight grand wouldn't even pay for all of the Twinkies and Captain Crunch that I ate. Every six months they would hire a new editor at AH and then they would jettison them out to the wilderness never to be heard from again. Kim would call me back and up the ante. Eventually I got to the point where I wanted to get away from Wichita Falls and wanted to expand my horizons; I wanted to see California so we eventually came to terms.

It was uncomfortable at first because I came out to California to edit the magazine but they never told the other guy that he had been replaced. I felt like shit for the first twenty-four or forty-eight hours! I was the first person that Kim ever gave the magazine completely over to and I found that very flattering. I did what I wanted and no one was looking over my shoulder. It was a cool way to work. Given enough time I, too, fell prey to the cycle of the rising and the setting of AMAZING HEROES editors — and once again found myself out of a job.

This interview paints me in a bad light; I've certainly been fired from quite a few editorial jobs! *(Laughter.)* After that, there was a fling with this God awful magazine called COMICS WEEK. Did

AMAZING HEROES editors — and was out of a job."

you ever see any of them?

LOU: *I sure did.*

MARK: It was this giant, huge, tent-size magazine that would wilt over people's shelves like a giant carnation. *(Laughter.)* It lasted for all of five issues, which took all of eight weeks to come out, hence the name COMICS WEEKLY. *(More laughter.)* It was fun while it lasted and I was able to unleash **Sidney Mellon** on the world.

LOU: *Should we reveal here for the first time whose photo was used for Sidney Mellon?*

MARK: We won't reveal who Sidney actually is — it wasn't me. I was digging through my high school yearbook and we needed a stereotypical picture of a comics fan, nerd geek, complete with glasses, and it was like, "Here's this **Mark Waid** kid." So, yeah, the picture was of me at age fourteen or whatever. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *And so Sidney's identity will continue to remain a secret until someone decides to tell all!*

A large percentage of DC books are getting pretty dark and amoral these days. I picked up a certain DC comic the other day and there was a scene of someone peeling someone's face off and tacking it to a wall with nails. It then went on to show a tongue being sucked out of a mouth and then being stuck into the mouth of the face on the wall so it could speak. How do you feel about stories like that?

MARK: Wasn't that in SUGAR AND SPIKE #99? *(Laughter.)* That approach is a valid approach. There is a lot of dark stuff going on in comics and I enjoy reading it; I just can't write it. My life isn't dark and gritty. My life is more of a giant sitcom. Also I believe in the nobility of the heroic spirit. I think the mainstream characters like Superman and Flash have an obligation to do good and to be righteous and true. There are ways to write characters like that and not make them boring. It's not easy because, if they're too squeaky clean, it's a problem. There's an anomaly here because I grew up reading DCs and not Marvels. My heroes don't have feet of clay. My favorite Marvel character of all time was Daredevil from the '60s. I could pick up a Marvel in the '60s and it would be full of Spider-Man or the Thing whining about one thing or the other. Daredevil's attitude was that I've got a problem, let's go kick some ass. That's my kind of guy.

LOU: *Using your example of Marvel's whiney characters, I think when Stan and Roy were writing they did whine but they also would go out and kick some ass; when later writers took over it lost some of the balance and they had more whining and less heroics. Changing the subject a bit, where do you think DC is going these days and which direction do you think they should be headed?*

MARK: Wow . . . from my limited point of view I think they're headed towards getting back to playing on the strengths of their characters. I think the Superman books are going through an amazing turn around and that they're really successful now. You have to give some credit to **Mike Carlin** for holding the books together — because everyone expected them to fall apart after **John Byrne** left. I know, because I was there the day **John Byrne** left — I believe I was dancing on the walls the day he left! *(Laughter.)* Everyone figured it was over and that sales would drop so give **Carlin** credit. It all relates to getting back to the heroic spirit. Let me bring up something that **Mark Wheatley** said, that I thought was brilliant. "The problem with comics today is that the new breed of writers come along and their approach is to take

PEOPLE WERE FROZEN IN TIME, LIVING BEWTEEN THE TICKS OF A CLOCK.
AND THE ONLY SOUNDS IN THE WORLD WERE THE ROAR OF THE WIND AND THE THUNDER OF MY OWN TWO FEET.

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"We're adults now; we know none of this makes any sense."

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST, AND I'M THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE.
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THEY HAVEN'T ALWAYS. WHEN I WAS TEN -- THE YEAR I SPENT MY SUMMER WITH AUNT IRIS -- THAT NAME BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE.
- SOMEONE WHO PROTECTED IT -- AND THE HEROISM IT STOOD FOR -- AS IF IT WERE A PRECIOUS LEGACY...
- RIGHT THROUGH TO THE END.

these characters and demystify them to make them ultra-realistic. What we should be doing is working to make them more mystifying, bigger than life."

LOU: *I was recently analyzing the Brit stuff and I made the point that people like Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman seem to have the knack that American scripters haven't developed, to bump things up to a higher level of unreality and then treat that realistically.*

MARK: I'd have to agree. I think a large part of their approach is that we're adults now, we know none of this makes any sense, so let's have fun with it.

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .

Dear DAK;

Hey, are there any **Bob Bolling** fans still out there? If the name is unfamiliar, that's because Bob spent his career working for one of the most thoroughly ignored companies in comics, Archie. He did all those early issues of LITTLE ARCHIE that are alleged by **Mr. Overstreet** to be worth so much money these days.

Ever wonder what happened to Mad Doctor Doom (who predates his near-namesake at Marvel by several years)? He was pretty active when Archie and his pals were toddlers, what with conquering the world and whatnot. Why is it they never even mention him in the Archie-as-a-teen series? Did the old fellow pass on?

Nah, I figure he's just doing time, and will be back again someday. Not that the gang ever really nailed him or anything like that. Actually, my guess is, he was probably just a neighborhood crank, a little eccentric perhaps, but relatively harmless—at least compared with the kids who were always harassing him.

Yeah, those kids! Man, they'd drive practically anybody crazy! And the way they went on, accusing him of unspeakable crimes and thwarting his every move and all—why, every time he went out to do a little spading in his garden, they'd be all over him, carrying on about how he was mining rare chemicals to use in death rays, or something equally unlikely.

So I guess they eventually *did* drive him crazy—so crazy he actually *killed* one of them. No doubt he regretted it right afterward, but it was too late, and that's why he's in the slammer today.

Anyway, that would explain what happened to Little Ambrose. Just in case you were wondering.

Don Markstein
14836 N. 35th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85032

"WEIRD MOTIONS"

Dear DAK:

Oh, the unseen cattle prods of the unconscious. I am not even remotely convinced that we store pent-up emotions in the liver during the winter and dump them in the spring (re: editorial in #111, "And Now for Something Completely Different"). Maybe Wild Turkey, gin, wine or beer. Now, maybe, maybe in the energy field surrounding the body, but the liver—nah.

As for it jibing with Yoga—these systems and religions and philosophies do come up with some weird notions. I've always considered Yoga, etc., to be similar to oxen yokes, with which we drag around our accumulated notions that we carefully organize in boxes in a bid wooden-wheeled wagon. In later years, when we get senile, we forget to bear-grease the axles and we succumb from a heart attack trying to move the whole mess into another day.

As for music therapy, in my late, somewhat drooling years, music has come to be so much noise to me—some, sort of pleasant but most, grating. So has TV, by the way.

Now, bullshit does have some value.

I remember (at age 7) my great, great uncle always in the spring (April, I think) went behind the barn to the gigantic pile of cowshit, cut off his longjohns, which he had sewed himself into (except for front and back flap) the previous late October, dug a hole in the manure and had my granddad bury and pack tight the manure around him up to his chin. Gripped in this malodorous mixture he stayed 24 hours. It was my job every two hours to go out and wipe his brow and give him a 12-ounce glass of water. After 24 hours we dug him up. He was one pink, rosy son of a bitch, feisty as hell and ten times as sprightly as the day before. Plus he had lost about 15 pounds. Since he was then 87 and lived quite a few years after I left the wilds of Kaintuck I presume it had some merit. Who knows?

Ed O'Neal
1112 Wimbleton Drive
Raleigh, NC 27609

What a great letter! I'm tempted to reply "Bullshit!"—but it sounds so bizarre that it just might work.

—DAK

SUPERMAN: NOW WHAT—?

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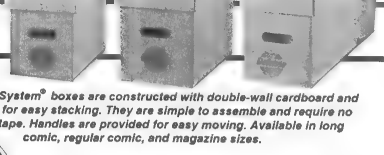

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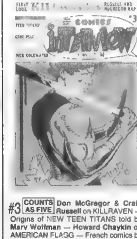

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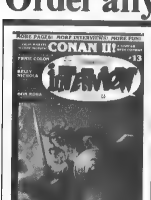

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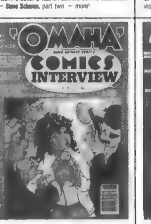

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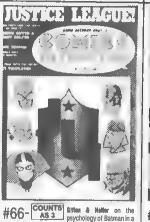

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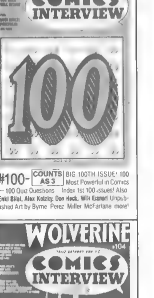

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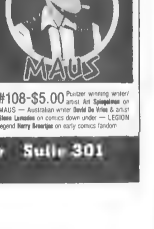

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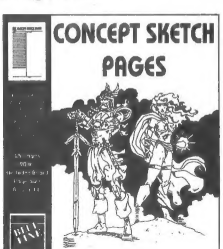

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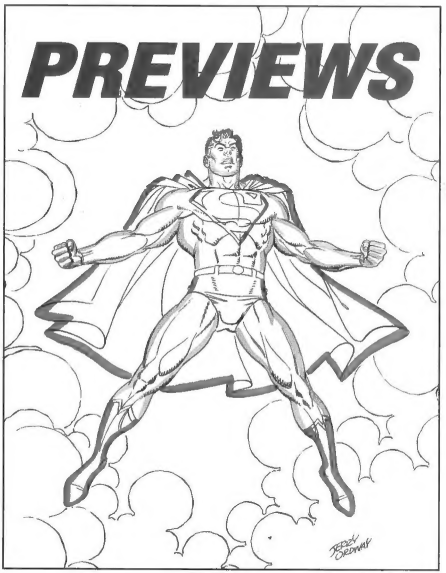

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